

2001-10-41
15 Jan 1947 1P
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BERNHARDT, Johannes Eberhard Franz

MICROFILMED
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The following Spanish Primer has been furnished by an attached agency:

German: born Osterode (East Prussia) January 1, 1897: as managing director in Madrid since at least 1941 of the German firm SOFINDUS (Sociedad Financiera Industrial, S.A.) he collaborated closely with both the Sipo & SD and the Abwehr: under his direction SOFINDUS, in addition to serving as a purchasing agency, handled foreign exchange transactions for the German Government and the German I.S., provided cover employment for Sipo & SD agents, sometimes paying a part of their salaries, facilitated the granting of Spanish visas to Abwehr agents by promising employment, set up bank deposits (probably in Spanish names) to provide Abwehr expenses in case of a diplomatic break between Spain and Germany, and assisted the German I.S. in various other ways: reported in April 1944 to be engaged in smuggling wolfram to Germany: helped KdM Spain with customs problems at Iran in September 1944: handled, in November 1944, the transfer by SOFINDUS to the German Embassy of Ptas. 16,000,000 for the use of KdM Spain: closely connected from October 1944 until April 1945, in collaboration with the German Embassy, the Naval Attaché and KdM Spain, with a number of attempts, mostly unsuccessful, to ship supplies clandestinely from Spanish ports to German garrisons isolated on the French coast, these undertakings being separate from those being conducted simultaneously for the same purpose by Ast Hamburg: listed for expulsion, but was still in Spain in April 1945: married with at least three children: passports (1) No. 1621/40, (2) No. 01567 issued Madrid Jan. 30, 1940, (3) No. 2031 issued Madrid Oct. 5/43 and (4) No. 1936. Address: (1944, office) Av. del Generalísimo 1, Madrid.

From a reliable source dated April 2, 1946: Johannes BERNHARDT, former head of SOFINDUS, has been Oberfuehrer der SS. - a title corresponding to the military rank of General. Subject, however, chose the administrative field and wore silver stars instead of gold ones. Whenever he travelled to Germany, he wore the Oberfuehrer's uniform after reaching Hendaye.

See despatch No. 3408 of January 15, 1947, sent to London and Berlin, which gives a full account of the activities of Johannes BERNHARDT in Spain.

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GCHowell

DATE 15 Jan 1947

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